

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 1-13 are pending. By this amendment, claim 2 is amended. The subject matter of the amendment to claim 2 is fully supported in the specification as filed and no new matter is added.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Claims 1-13 are presented for prosecution on the merits.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

In the outstanding Office Action mailed September 27, 2004, claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 2 has been amended responsive to this rejection. If any additional amendment is necessary to overcome this rejection, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative.

Claims 1-13 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 3-6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bajorek et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,465,186, hereinafter "Bajorek"). Claims 2, 7-9 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bajorek. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections, as follows.

Independent claim 1 recites, in part:

at least two diode elements connected toward one direction
in parallel with terminals...

This configuration of diodes may be seen in Fig. 1 of the application as filed.

The Office Action asserts that Bajorek discloses this feature in box 77 of FIGS. 6b and 6c. However, in box 77 of FIGS. 6b and 6c, Bajorek discloses two diodes connected in opposite directions, as disclosed in the specification as filed at p. 2, line 22 - p. 3, line 5, and p. 4, lines 4-10. Bajorek discloses protecting a magnetoresistive (MR) element against electrostatic discharge (ESD) during the manufacture and assembly of a magnetic storage system by shorting the conductive leads of the MR element together to provide a conductive path bypassing the MR element. Thus, ESD current through the MR element is minimized during manufacture of the system. Bajorek also explicitly discloses the use of reversed diode pairs connected across the MR element to prevent ESD destruction of the MR element. See Bajorek, Abstract.

Unlike Bajorek, the claimed invention discloses providing at least two diode elements connected toward one direction in parallel with terminals connected across a thin-film magnetic head element in order to prevent pin-inversion of the pinned layer of the MR element. Since pin inversion occurs at a lower ESD current than ESD destruction, the claimed invention uses at least two diodes connected in the same direction across the MR element. Bajorek is not concerned with and does not mention the problem of pin-inversion in the MR element. Rather, Bajorek is only concerned with ESD destruction. Accordingly, Bajorek fails to disclose or suggest the use of at least two diode elements connected toward one direction, as recited in independent claim 1. Thus, Bajorek neither anticipates nor renders obvious claim 1.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is patentably distinct over Bajorek and in condition for allowance.

As claims 2-13 depend from claim 1, claims 2-13 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of claims 1-13, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing client matter number 100186-09025.

Respectfully submitted,

Arent Fox, PLLC



Michele L. Cornell
Registration No. 52,763

Customer No. 004372
1050 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036-5339
Telephone No. (202) 857-6104
Facsimile No. (202) 857-6395
MLC:sg